

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Low-income women in Nicaragua will be trained and equipped to distribute quality and nutritious food to their communities

The \$400,000 grant to Supply Hope provides infrastructure and expertise

Washington D.C. May 1st, 2016. The Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a grant in the amount of \$400,000 to support Mercado Fresco, a program developed by the non-profit organization Supply Hope. The funding is provided through SCALA, a MIF Program to promote the empowerment of low income population through the expansion of inclusive distribution networks, and will consolidate and expand Mercado Fresco model over the next three years in Managua, Nicaragua.

The project will contribute to the economic development of poor communities by bringing to scale ‘Mercado Fresco’, a social-business program developed by Supply Hope. Low-income women operate home-based stores with a simple, proven, franchise-approach business model. These “micro”-franchises offer fresh and nutritious foods in densely populated, low-income neighborhoods of Managua. In addition to generating reliable income for women at the base of the pyramid, Mercado Fresco stores also become a primary channel for low-income families to purchase high quality food products at affordable prices.

The innovative Mercado Fresco model combines three aspects of IDB’s development priorities for Nicaragua: economic development, social inclusion, and value chain strengthening. The scaling strategy for Mercado Fresco requires expanding the training, distribution and food processing facilities that support the micro-franchises, which will be financed with Supply Hope’s additional sources of incomes.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 27% of all Nicaraguans are suffering from undernourishment, the highest percentage in Central America. Nutrition is a direct consequence of income. With 31.8% of people living with less than \$2 a day (World Bank data 2009), poor people in Nicaragua and especially women, struggle to find sustainable livelihoods to support their households and provide the adequate nutrient intake required for the development of their family members, particularly their children. Mercado Fresco’s inclusive approach provides reliable earnings to micro-franchise operators while improving the sanitation, nutritional value and affordability of food for low-income markets.

In addition to supporting the expansion of Mercado Fresco, Supply Hope’s business model and capacities will be strengthened through IDB funding to become an inclusive distribution business incubator and accelerator. Supply Hope’s long term goal is to expand internationally with multiple micro-franchises serving low-income market needs. IDB’s recognition and extensive experience from other multi-stakeholder partnership projects involving the public, private, and civil society sectors will be valuable inputs for Supply Hope.

About us

The **Inter-American Development Bank** is devoted to improving lives. Established in 1959, the IDB is a leading source of long-term financing for economic, social and institutional development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB also conducts cutting-edge research and provides policy advice, technical assistance and training to public and private sector clients throughout the region.

The **Multilateral Investment Fund** (MIF), a member of the IDB Group, supports private sector-led development benefiting low-income populations and the poor—their businesses, their farms, and their households. The aim is to give them tools to boost their incomes: access to markets and the skills to compete in those markets, access to finance, and access to basic services, including green technology. A core MIF mission is to act as a development laboratory—experimenting, pioneering, and taking risks to build and support successful micro, small and medium business models. More information can be found at www.fomin.org

SCALA is a MIF program aimed at increasing income levels among poor and less advantaged populations through the development and scaling of inclusive distribution networks. Through SCALA,

the MIF and its strategic partners and co-sponsors the Citi Foundation and the International

Development Research Center of Canada, provide grants to projects developing business models based on inclusive distribution networks, thus integrating micro-entrepreneurs into distribution channels of

larger companies and social enterprises interested in promoting their products and services among low-

income communities.

Supply Hope was founded in 2012 by Beth Meadows, a successful U.S. entrepreneur and franchisor. Their mission is to create opportunities for families living in poverty to earn a reliable income through micro-franchises.

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